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Sublime *Rauschen*: Enlightening Sound from Locke to Klopstock

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Once a critical commonplace, the ocularcentrism of the Enlightenment is now as disputed within the history of the senses as the term “Enlightenment” itself.¹ Work in sound studies and cultural musicology is reasserting the importance of sound to science, epistemology, aesthetics, and social life in the long eighteenth century.² In German scholarship, *Rauschen*—a rustling or rushing positioned uncertainly between sound and noise—has played a small but significant role in these developments and in the re-reading of the sublime that they provoke. Echoing older narratives about ocularcentrism, however, some recent studies imply that music became a sublime art par excellence only with a waning of Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century, and only when music was aligned with *Rauschen* as an

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1. On and against ocularcentrism, see, e.g., Walter Ong, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977); Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 85, 106; Mark Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 19–40; Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

2. See, e.g., Penelope Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999); Smith, *Sensing the Past*, 41–58; Peter Denney, “Silencing the Poor: Soundscape, Landscape and Society in 18th-Century Britain” (PhD diss., University of York, 2008); Vanessa Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford University Press, 2008); James Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations: The History of the Idea of Music as Cause of Disease* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Shelley Trower, *Senses of Vibration: A History of the Pleasure and Pain of Sound* (New York: Continuum, 2012).

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overwhelming wash of unencoded and undecodable sensations. An opposition to unencoded sound is seen here as a keynote of Enlightenment, a movement supposedly obsessed, from Locke onward, with “the mission [of] build[ing] an empire of semiotic Puritanism.”³ Considering English as well as German poetry, and drawing on eighteenth-century music writings and philosophy, this essay questions assumptions about the repudiation of *Rauschen* before Romanticism, reexamines the sound’s relationship with “enlightenment” sublimates and suggests reasons for some misprisions of eighteenth-century *Rauschen* in recent scholarship. The affinities so often seen between postmodern and Romantic linguistic thought have led to fruitful readings of later Romantic and nineteenth-century *Rauschen* but have flattened our view of the world against which Romanticism supposedly rebelled. In some ways a test case of sonic sensation for empiricists, idealists, and rationalists, *Rauschen* and its cognates remind us of the multiple and conflicting “missions” projected by the “empire” of enlightenment.

The title of this essay couples John Locke (1632–1704), a founder of empiricism, and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803), a pietistic poet often concerned with the interactions of salvation and sensation, for the simple reason that both illuminate the concept of *Rauschen*. These writers are analyzed alongside a group of German eighteenth-century music theorists; the rationalist and idealist philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716); and Edward Young (1681–1765), a poet admired and befriended by Klopstock.⁴ The writings that this essay focuses on have strong intertextual and cultural-linguistic connections, although, on the one hand, their authors wrote in different languages and contexts and, on the other hand, our discussion will “radiate” out from the “point of contact” (*Ansatzpunkt*) offered by *Rauschen* to touch on French- as well as English-language sources.⁵ *Rauschen* and “rush” conveniently have the same etymology and share with “rustle” (and its cognate *rieseln*) root senses of movement, speed, or shaking.⁶ *Rauschen* and rushing tend to happen to bodies, or mark their

3. Bernhard Siegert, *Relays: Literature as an Epoch of the Postal System*, trans. Kevin Repp (Stanford University Press, 1999), 1.

4. Klopstock addressed an ode to Young and praised his *Night Thoughts* as peerless in the “higher poetry” (*höhern Poesie*) of the Christian sublime (my translation; unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own). See Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, *Werke und Briefe* (*Hamburger Klopstock-Ausgabe*), ed. Adolf Beck et al., 40 vols. to date (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974–) (hereafter HKA), *Werke*, 1:126; *Der Messias*, vol. 1 (Copenhagen, 1755), **2v. The poets exchanged friendly letters. See Klopstock, *Briefe* (HKA), 3:69–70, 80; 4.1:6, 88.

5. On *Ansatzpunkte*, see Erich Auerbach, “Philologie der Weltliteratur,” in *Weltliteratur: Festgabe für Fritz Strich zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Walter Muschg and Emil Staiger (Bern: Francke, 1952), 47–48.

6. See the relevant entries in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com>, and in *Duden Herkunftswörterbuch* (Mannheim: Dudenverlag, 2001).

moments of contact and friction. Meanwhile, neighboring terms in French—from *bruit* (noise) and its derivative *bruissement* (rustling), to *babillement* (babbling), *bourdonnement* (buzzing), *mugissement* (roaring), and *murmure* (murmur)—have Latinate roots that described sounds made by agents (lion, asses, babies, insects, bulls, men, or fractious crowds).⁷

But beyond this kind of philological consideration, another reason for naming Locke alongside Klopstock is simply that they sound good together: all those *o*'s and plosives, one smooth *l* leading into each; the poet's longer name amplifying the philosopher's. Then there are the associated sounds of keys clicking in locks, horses clopping (a word related to *klopfen*, to knock), or the rap of a *Stock* (staff) on hard ground. The attraction of sounds to one another and to the ear is one way into the multifaceted problem of *Rauschen*. Sounds can *rauschen* when, attracted to one another, they congregate and swarm, creating associations against, or in excess of, normal signification. Often rendered as "rustling," "rushing," or "roaring," and so covering a range of acoustic intensities, *Rauschen* is also etymologically related to *Geräusch* (noise or sounds) and *Rausch* (intoxication). In Joseph von Eichendorff's *In der Fremde* (ca. 1811–15), rushing and the disorientation of intoxication conspicuously blend into one another:

I hear the little streams rustle
Here and there in the forest,
In the forest in the rustling
I know not where I am.⁸

Rauschen, then, often implies movement and association, but also disassociation—what we might call a disassociation of the ear from conscious reasoning, and even from the subconscious perceptual work of filtering and sorting stimuli.

Alongside its proliferation in German Romantic evocations of winds, brooks, and waterfalls, *Rauschen* has attracted increased theoretical attention in recent decades, especially in its senses as *interference* or *static*, or in the modern collocation *weißes Rauschen* (white noise). Itself meaningless and pitchless, white noise holds a theoretically infinite number of frequencies, forming an (indeterminate) ground for all meaningful, determinate sounds. This dense congregation of frequencies is experienced as a screen against which articulate sounds appear more easily. We strain to

7. See the relevant entries in *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*, ed. O. Bloch and W. von Wartburg (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964).

8. "Ich hör' die Bächlein rauschen / Im Walde her und hin, / Im Walde in dem Rauschen / Ich weiß nicht, wo ich bin" (Joseph von Eichendorff, *In der Fremde*, lines 1–4, in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, vol. 1, ed. Hartwig Schultz [Frankfurt am Main: Deutsche Klassiker Verlag, 1987], 173–74).

hear and interpret this *Rauschen* in itself, just as post-Kantian subjects strain to imagine an infinity that is nonetheless the measuring stick for all finite, determinate measurements.

For Kant, what took us closest to imagining infinity—offering a negative presentation of a totality only accessible to reason—was the sublime.⁹ Closely following Kant's mathematical sublime, the philosopher's musically minded disciple Christian Friedrich Michaelis (1770–1834) wrote that a powerful “downward-rushing [*herabrauschenden*], foaming waterfall,” “flooding sea[s],” or “wild music” could trigger the sublime. Michaelis's sublime is reached when reason bypasses the psycho-physical limits of our ability to process seemingly infinite, overwhelming aural stimulus: rushing sounds “tear our imagination along with such a power [*Gewalt*] that it cannot grasp any totality [*Ganzes*], but instead, driven to and fro, as it were, floats in the infinite, and raises reason to the thought of eternity.”¹⁰

Modified versions of *Rauschen* subsequently fed into the modified Kantian sublimities and limit-experiences of postmodernism. Here, however, the Kantian telos of comprehending a supersensuous totality through supersensuous reason is typically rejected in favor of movement without goals. The hierarchies of surface and deeper meanings, innumerable data and resolved sense, are inverted. Like the ideal children in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985), engrossed by the television's “waves and radiation,”¹¹ those listening for *weißes Rauschen* learn that the medium is the message—its message: pure movement, aimless circulation. At its most intoxicating, this movement grants exhilaration; at its most sobering, an awareness of what Michel Serres called “the sound and the fury” of things.¹² A slew of *Rauschen*-like sounds inform Serres's anti-Kantian attempts to think and write “the multiple as such,” not subsumed “under unity” (the kind of unity achieved by reason in Kant's sublime): *noise*, *bruit*, *rumeur*, *brouhaha*.¹³ The multiplicity of subperceptible “background noise,” Serres intimates, is more sustaining, fundamental, and meaningful than meaning: “no logos,” he writes in a characteristic refusal of *creatio ex nihilo*, “without

9. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, in *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 vols. to date (Berlin: Georg Reimer/de Gruyter, 1900–), 5:264–78 (§29).

10. Christian Friedrich Michaelis, “Ueber das Erhabene in der Musik,” *Deutsche Monatschrift* 1 (1801): 44.

11. Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (1985; repr., London: Picador, 2012), 60–61.

12. Michel Serres, *Genèse* (Paris: Grasset, 1982), 23. English quoted from *Genesis*, trans. Geneviève James and James Nielson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 7. Serres of course alludes to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* 5.5.27. On exhilaration, see Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism; or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 10.

13. Serres, *Genèse*, 19–21, *Genesis*, 5–7.

noise.”¹⁴ Insofar as the component movements and sounds that make up a “rustling” are multiple without being articulated (separated and ordered into a determinate totality) or articulate (in the sense of being able to signify and represent through grammars of resemblance and difference), they likewise meet the criteria of Lyotard’s postmodern sublime: denying “the solace of good forms,” “put[ting] forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself,” “wag[ing] a war on totality.”¹⁵

In the wake of such developments, it is often assumed that *Rauschen* was ignored or reviled until Romantics and post-Kantians recuperated it to valorize indeterminacy, imagination, or chaos.¹⁶ In 2010, for instance, Veit Erlmann’s innovative history of aurality, *Reason and Resonance*, suggested that music became “the most sublime of the arts” only after Kant, and only because music then “aspired to the condition of *Rauschen*, disrupting the . . . Cartesian system of exchange, representation, and error-free thinking.”¹⁷ Earlier music theorists and literary figures including Haller, Goethe, and Klopstock apparently shrank back from *Rauschen*.¹⁸

A brief examination of German music theory between the 1720s and 1780s undermines this claim. True, the *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1771–74), an important encyclopedia edited by Klopstock’s one-time friend Johann Georg Sulzer (1720–1779), deplored swiftly “rushing” scalar lines in advocating simple, singable, *galant*-style melodies.¹⁹ The preference for ease and clarity expressed in this entry on melody, however, did not entail banishing *rauschende* movement from accompanying voices, a texture recognized as “necessary” to the “expression” of “wild and rush-

14. Serres, *Genesis*, 7; cf. Michel Serres, *Der Parasit*, trans. Michael Bischoff (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 28: “Am Anfang ist das Rauschen.”

15. Jean François Lyotard, “Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism?,” trans. Régis Durand, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester University Press, 1984), 81–82. As Fredric Jameson notes in the foreword to this edition, Lyotard’s essays are “a thinly veiled polemic against Jürgen Habermas’s . . . vision of a ‘noise-free,’ transparent, fully communicational society,” a vision aligned with Enlightenment (vii). On Lyotard and music without “good forms,” see Kiene Brillenburg Wurth, *Musically Sublime: Indeterminacy, Infinity, Irresolvability* (Ashland, OH: Fordham University Press, 2009), esp. 104–38.

16. A notable exception is Rüdiger Campe, “The *Rauschen* of the Waves,” trans. Simon Richter, *Substance* 61 (1990): 21–31.

17. Veit Erlmann, *Reason and Resonance: A History of Modern Aurality* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 168; cf. Susanne Scharnowski, “‘Es spricht nicht, es rauscht und toset nur!’ Eine kurze Geschichte der Ästhetik des Erhabenen und des Rauschens,” in *Rauschen: Seine Phänomenologie und Semantik zwischen Sinn und Störung*, ed. Andreas Hiepko and Katja Stopka (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001).

18. Erlmann, *Reason and Resonance*, 167.

19. Johann Georg Sulzer, ed., *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1771–74), s.v. “Melodie,” 2:756.

ing [*rauschend*]" pieces.²⁰ In some cases, rare but not unmusical, melody itself portrays "more of an onward-rushing cry [*fortrauschendes Geschrei*] than an actual song [*wirklichen Gesang*]." ²¹

This recognition of a special class of melodies working through rather than against rushing echoes an earlier entry in the encyclopedia on the *Lied*. Here, a distinction emerged between the simplicity and unity of tone and affect in *Lieder* and the complexity and internal changeableness of "odes," where "one strophe [can] flo[w] softly, while the others impetuously rush [*rauschen*]. The ode's lofty and irregular flight cannot occur in the *Lied*."²² The preface to Klopstock's *Geistliche Lieder* (1758), a work cited in this entry, had drawn similar distinctions between easily grasped, beautiful *Lieder* and difficult, sublime *Gesänge*.²³ Klopstock himself was evoking existing distinctions between simple genres and the sublimity of difficult ode forms, especially Pindarics. The Pindaric's fiery, irregular, sublime flight had been praised by Longinus and was drawn into the *Allgemeine Theorie*'s own discussion of the symphony.²⁴

A connection between *Rauschen* and the sublime is also detectable in Sulzer's article on landscape. "The roaring [*Rauschen*] of a mighty waterfall" and "onrushing [*Heranrauschen*] of a great storm" here belong to a physico-theological schema of providential astonishment, a schema aligned with the sublime from the early eighteenth century.²⁵ Terrifying rushing sounds drive home our "weakness and dependence on higher powers" and give us a sensuous intimation of "the omnipotent power which reigns in all of nature."²⁶ For primitive "untaught human[s]," terrifying nature provided "first conceptions of the divinity"; for modern humans, it develops

20. Ibid., 2:759.

21. Ibid., 2:754.

22. Ibid., s.v. "Lied (Dichtkunst)," 2:713.

23. Ibid., 2:714; Klopstock, "Einleitung," in *Geistliche Lieder* (Copenhagen: Friedrich Christian Pelt, 1758), 5–17.

24. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, trans. D. A. Russell, in *Aristotle: Poetics; Longinus: On the Sublime; Demetrius: On Style*, ed. Stephen Halliwell et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), sec. 33.5; Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. "Symphonie," 2:1122: "Such an allegro is within the symphony what a Pindaric ode is within poetry: it elevates and shocks . . . the soul of the listener, and to be successful demands the same spirit, the same sublime imagination, and the same artistry" (Ein solches Allegro in der Symphonie ist, was eine pindarische Ode in der Poesie ist, es erhebt und erschüttert . . . die Seele des Zuhörers, und erfordert denselben Geist, dieselbe erhabene Einbildungskraft, und dieselbe Kunstwissenschaft). Compare Mark Evan Bonds, "The Symphony as Pindaric Ode," in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton University Press, 1997).

25. On physico-theology and the sublime, see Carsten Zelle, "Das Erhabene in der deutschen Frühaufklärung. Zum Einfluß der englischen Physikotheologie auf Barthold Heinrich Brockes' *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*," *Arcadia* 25 (1990): 225–41.

26. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.v. "Landschaft," 2:653–54.

“moral and emotional sentiments [*Empfindungen*]” by teaching us to “admire the great, the novel, and the uncommon.”²⁷

So although Sulzer’s encyclopedia repeatedly laments that improving, unified, lucid, affect-oriented *Lieder* are neglected for “*rauschende* concertos”—with their “*rauschende*, meaningless” ripieno voices—*Rauschen* is nevertheless associated not only with the meaningless and distracting noise of a fashionable modernity but also with the difficult, rarefied yet wild, aesthetic of the sublime, discerned in nature and art by the profound critic.²⁸ This is a coincidence of the wild and natural with the elite and cultivated.²⁹ It draws attention to something that will emerge increasingly strongly in this essay: the image of sublime *Rauschen* as a channel between first and second natures, an energetic, sensuous passage between untamed nature and the reformed and reforming sphere of poetry and culture.

The equivocation about *Rauschen* in Sulzer’s encyclopedia resonates with an earlier Berlin publication, Christian Gottfried Krause’s *Von der musikalischen Poesie* (1752). Krause was a prolific composer of song texts and passionate advocate of the noble simplicity and emotional appeal associated with *Lieder* in the *Allgemeine Theorie*.³⁰ In keeping with the resonance model of hearing developed in the later seventeenth century and subsequent developments in nerve theory, Krause reasons that “music consists in movements” of the air and “aural nerves” and that music must therefore represent movements, whether invisible-internal (affective) or visible-external (physical).³¹ Exemplary external movements include diffuse, kinetic, sometimes violent sounds apparently akin to *Rauschen*: “rattling” (*rasselnd*), “howling” (*Heulen*), “thundering, cracking” (*Donnern, Krachen*), “billowing, foaming, bubbling” (*wallend, schäumend, sprudelnd*), “trickling, murmuring” (*rieselnd, murmelnd*).³² Yet Krause notes that “wind and waves, the lisp of leaves, the *Rauschen* of a stream, thunder and

27. Ibid.: “das Große, das Neue, das Ausserordentliche bewundern lernen.” Compare the vocabulary of Joseph Addison’s second essay on “Pleasures of Imagination,” *Spectator*, no. 412 (June 23, 1712), in *The Spectator*, vol. 4, ed. Donald Bond (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 540–44.

28. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, s.vv. “Musik,” 2:788; “Lied (Dichtkunst),” 2:717; “Ripienstimmen,” 2:987. Further complicating the values in play, there is an intimate relationship between the vogue for simple *Lieder* in this milieu and the German reception of the sublime, associated not solely with complexity and difficulty, but also with soul-piercing *edle Einfalt* (noble simplicity). See Dietmar Till, *Das doppelte Erhabene: Eine Argumentationsfigur von der Antike bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2006), 234–316.

29. On this connection of the wild and civilized, see Matthew Riley, “Civilizing the Savage: Johann Georg Sulzer and the ‘Aesthetic Force’ of Music,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 127 (2002): 1–22.

30. On Krause, see Daniel Berg, *The Correspondence of Christian Gottfried Krause: A Music Lover in the Age of Sensibility* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

31. Christian Gottfried Krause, *Von der musikalischen Poesie* (Berlin: Voß, 1752), 198.

32. Ibid., 198–99.

lightning, are completely incapable of musical imitation,” since music must always maintain “charm” or “grace” (Anmuth).³³ It remains unclear, however, why thundering should be illustrative and also proscribed, and why the relatively gentle movements of leaves and streams should be uncharming. The musical movements of emotion, tellingly, are not all charming. Krause’s exemplars include misery, rage, horror, fear, and desperation, alongside mixed feelings redolent of the sublime: “pleasant fear, lovely divine terror, awed pleasure” (angenehme Furcht, holdes heiliges Schrecken, Ehrfurchts volle Lust).³⁴

In short, Krause provides a confusing account of musical and unmusical phenomena and words. It struggles to reconcile the demands of natural-sensualist movements (the empirical world), imitation of nature (the world of representation), and “natural” gracefulness (the world of mores and morality). The text’s equivocation perhaps points to strains internal to the milieu of Krause as well as Sulzer and his collaborators, a milieu linked with the so-called first Berlin *Liederschule*, with its insistence on simplicity and textural lucidity, and more broadly with the paradoxical values of natural-yet-polished *galanterie* and *ingenium* permeating the Berlin of Frederick the Great (r. 1740–72).³⁵

Beyond this milieu, *Rauschen* accrued more positive connotations. The *Musikalisch-kritische Bibliothek* (1778–79) of Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749–1818), a Göttingen-based musician now best remembered as J. S. Bach’s first biographer, associated *Rauschen* with concepts overlapping with sublimity: splendor, immersive illusionism, and the primitive. An ode to Handel reprinted in the *Bibliothek* enthuses over the “magnificent sound of the rushing strings” (prächtigen Schall der rauschenden Saiten) in an opera; over the composer’s “sublime song,” in which “the surges of the sea roar” (die Wogen des Meers [rauschen]); and over the magic wrought by the keyboard, a single, domestic instrument able to summon up, first, a whole orchestral overture, “And then the curtains rush[ing] up; [then] the arias [being] sung / Through the silver strings.”³⁶ Possibly alluding to

33. Ibid., 199.

34. On such feelings and the sublime, see Zelle, “Das Erhabene.”

35. On this milieu, see Berg, *Correspondence*, xi–xxix; Thomas Christensen, introduction to *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment: Selected Writings of Johann Georg Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch*, ed. Nancy Baker and Thomas Christensen (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3–24; Laurenz Lütteken, Ute Pott, and Carsten Zelle, eds., *Urbanität als Aufklärung: Karl Wilhelm Ramler und die Kultur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003); Daniel Hartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003), 354–439; on *ingenium* and the *galant*, see Till, *Doppeltes Erhabene*, 234–48.

36. “Und dann rauschet der Vorhang empor; die Arie singet / Durch die silbernen Saiten” (Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Musikalisch-kritische Bibliothek*, 3 vols. [Gotha: Ettinger, 1778–79], 3:343–45).

Klopstock's *Frühlingsfeyer*—a poem to which we will return—another ode in the *Bibliothek* pictures Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's listener rapt above the world, where

The ocean rushes under him
A droplet—and the chariot of the Sun
Is beheld as a spark!³⁷

Elsewhere, discussing the difficulties of reviving ancient music for polished modern ears, Forkel observes that, the closer a nation stands to nature, the more it loves “*rauschende* music” rather than “fine” and “artful” composition.³⁸

More pragmatic than many commentators about the chasm between ancient and modern tastes, and equivocal about the value of unimproved nature, Forkel nonetheless recalls other music writers in associating *Rauschen* with naturalness. The multifaceted musician and diplomat Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) set such naturalness within an imitative paradigm in his *Critica musica* (1722–23), listing *Rauschen* alongside *Sumsen* (humming), *Gemurmel* (murmuring), and *Schweben* (floating) as words that “can be well expressed through musical / and melodious phrases.”³⁹ In a similar vein, Mattheson's friend, the composer Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767), marveled at the way the “soft rustling” (*sanftes Rauschen*) of a brook appeared on the silent page of a nature poem by Heinrich Brockes.⁴⁰ Telemann gracefully regretted that his own music so inadequately imitated Brockes's mimetic feat. For their younger contemporary, the musician Johann Adolph Scheibe (1708–76), oceanic *Rauschen* belonged to the protomusic of nature, a God-given melodiousness within external phenomena that mirrored humans' internal, God-given propensity to love and to produce melodious sound.⁴¹

Connecting these relatively disparate *Rauschens* in eighteenth-century music theory, then, is a concern with naturalness and with movements between natural objects and cultivated products. Sometimes, nature falls short of faux-natural art (as with Krause); sometimes, musical art falls

37. “Rauscht unter ihm der Ocean / Ein Tropfen—und den Sonnenwagen / Sieht er für einen Funken an!” (ibid., 1:317). Compare Klopstock, *Die Frühlingsfeyer*, lines 1–17, in *Werke* (HKA), 1.1:170–81; hereafter cited by line number, following Klopstock's 1759 text.

38. Forkel, *Musikalisch-kritische Bibliothek*, 3:161–62.

39. Johann Mattheson, *Critica musica*, 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1722/23–1725), 1:103.

40. Georg Philipp Telemann, “Gedanken über (S[alvo]. T[itutli].) Herrn Brockes Sing-Gedicht vom Wasser im Fröhlinge, als er selbiges in die Music gesetzt hatte,” in *C. F. Weichmanns Poesie der Nieder-Sachsen*, ed. Christian Friedrich Weichmann, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Kißner, 1732), 317, line 14.

41. Johann Adolph Scheibe, *Der critische Musicus*, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Beneke, 1737–40), 1:35.

short of nature and poetry (as with Telemann); sometimes, nature includes and subtends art (as with Matheson and Scheibe); and sometimes, sublime art rushes to create a second nature (and perhaps a second, post-ancient, *Rauschen*, as implicitly with Forkel and Sulzer). This sample of music writings helps to sketch out the prehistory of the intimate relationship between *Rauschen* and later language philosophy that has been central to twenty-first-century interest in the term. In particular, it supports Oliver Simons's revisionist argument that *Rauschen* in literature around 1800 evoked "not interfering noise, but a message, sublime experience, or [the] archaic."⁴²

Simons's contrast between noise and message points to a crucial feature of the kind of language philosophy that has been the focus of recent scholarship: it is primarily about semantics and semiotics, about meanings carried by articulate signs and interruptible by inarticulate noises.⁴³ The materials for thinking about music primarily as a sign system might be seen stirring in the passages touched on above, insofar as movements between nature and culture, "object" and "representation," and questions about the requirements and proprieties of representation (that it must be natural, or charming, or scientific, or pious), are basic to semiotic theories. Yet a binary opposition between meaningful musical sign and non-sign/noise is not apparent. This is understandable if, in Gary Tomlinson's words, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "si[t] between a pre-modern moment when musical semiosis participated in world-ordering resemblances and a modernity when musical imitation came to seem trifling in comparison to an impalpable, non-objective sublime."⁴⁴ Part of the lure in the nineteenth century of the Kantian sublime, and of music, is that both can offer somehow to get around the indirections and potential deceptions inherent to verbal language understood as a mediating sign system, and to experience understood as mediated by forms and categories.

42. Oliver Simons, "Botschaft Oder Störung? Eine Diskursgeschichte des 'Rauschens' in der Literatur um 1800," *Monatshefte* 100 (2008): 43.

43. Such connotations are invoked, for instance, by the title of the collection edited by Friedrich Kittler, Thomas Macho, and Sigrid Weigel, *Zwischen Rauschen und Offenbarung: Zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Stimme* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002). Katja Stopka, *Semantik des Rauschens: Über ein Akustisches Phänomen in der deutschsprachigen Literatur* (Munich: Meidenbauer, 2005), plays on the paradox of semantically analyzing nonsemantic *Rauschen* in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. Compare Bernhard Siegert, "Die Geburt der Literatur aus dem Rauschen der Kanäle: Zur Poetik der phatischen Funktion," in *Electric Laokoon: Zeichen und Medien, von der Lochkarte zur Grammatologie*, ed. Michael Franz, Wolfgang Schäffner, Bernhard Siegert, and Robert Stockhammer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), 5–41.

44. Gary Tomlinson, "Monumental Musicology," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132 (2007): 365.

Yet contrasts between the premodern and modern are easily overdrawn, and the eighteenth-century history of *Rauschen* is not encapsulated by a shift from premodern resemblance (where natural and imitative “rushings” should be simply unremarkable) to modern representation (where “rushing” might be both more problematic and more appealing). To explore more deeply the freighting of eighteenth-century *Rauschen* in and beyond language theory—in the history of the senses and epistemology—and its relationships with music and the sublime, we can turn to a well-known ode by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock.

First published in 1759, Klopstock’s *Frühlingsfeyer* (Spring celebration) has been something of a touchstone of sublimity in the German literary tradition, though a sublimity easily parodied as enthusiastic, irrational, or anti-Enlightenment.⁴⁵ Swooned over in Goethe’s *Werther* (1774) and set to music in Mann’s *Doktor Faustus* (1947)—where perverse homage is paid to its “high-strung and rushing pathos of religious-hymnic praise” (*hochgestimmte und rauschende Pathos religiös-hymnischer Lobpreisung*)—the poem also testifies to Klopstock’s fondness for *Rauschen*.⁴⁶ The term appears six times in the ode, helping to weave together its moments of wonder at creation, abasement before the Creator, and final reconciliation and exaltation. Indeed, reconciliation and unification are essential to the poem’s rehearsal of the sublime.

The ode, in a nutshell, contemplates God through creation: a speculative vision of the cosmos’s immensity reveals the immensity of God’s grace in creating and caring for Earth and its inhabitants; the unfathomable smallness of a passing insect prompts ruminations on the immortality of creatures; finally, God is recognized in a storm breaking through woods where the speaker himself is located. *Rauschen* is laced through this narrative. First, in the ode’s opening creation scene, “torrents of light” “rushed” as they “welled up” and “ran” from God’s hand to form an “ocean of worlds” (1–2, 14–17). In response, “choirs of jubilation” praise God in ravished abandonment (5), paralleling the poet’s own rhapsodic praise in later verses. The sound of creation (*Rauschen*) here resonates with the sound at crea-

45. On Klopstock and the charge of enthusiasm, see Klopstock, *Briefe* (HKA), 2.2:680; Immanuel Kant, *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*, in *Kant’s gesammelte Schriften*, 15:399–400; Johann Gottfried Herder, *Werke in zehn Bänden*, ed. Günter Arnold et al., 10 vols. in 11 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985–2000), 1:527–34; Wilhelm Große, “Aufklärung und Empfindsamkeit,” in *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Walter Hinderer (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001), 166. Isaiah Berlin repeatedly cited a phrase from a poem by Herder closely modeled on *Frühlingsfeyer* as evidence of Herder’s Counter-Enlightenment thinking. See Robert Norton, “The Myth of the Counter-Enlightenment,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 68 (2007): 645–47.

46. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1986), 30; Thomas Mann, *Doktor Faustus*, ed. Peter de Mendelssohn (Berlin: Fischer, 1980), 351.

tion (outpourings of song)—a pairing congruent with Klopstock's Lutheran heritage, where singing God's praise is the world's vocation, not a secondary response to, but part of, creation's fulfillment.

As the speaker turns from the macroscopic and microscopic to his surrounding landscape, winds "rush" and "rush through" the woods (77, 113), smashing the trees in a cataclysmic storm that recalls the slaying of Egypt's firstborn at Passover (and so, typologically, Christ's atonement). *Rauschen* thus links creation with destruction, common partners in eighteenth-century accounts of the sublime. Klopstock's theological sublime uses this pattern to underscore God's continual grace, insisting that the whole creation, including what looks like evil—night, lightning, rain—is a blessing.⁴⁷ Even the destruction of the storm is claimed not to testify to God's wrath but becomes a skepticism-defying "witness to [God's] approach" or "proximity" (Zeuge des Nahens) (104). Like the wind, whose movement is heard and seen as it affects other objects, God is "visible" in the storm, yet also transcendent, eluding direct apprehension (80). Klopstock again takes his cue here from Luther, whose Bible translation used *Rauschen* for sounds announcing God's nearness and accompanying revelation.⁴⁸

Finally, *Rauschen* accompanies the sublime's characteristic final movement, where astonishing power is transformed from something to which one is subjected into something elevating, something in which one might participate. Having been stirred up by divine winds, the landscape itself now takes on the power of *Rauschen*, as heaven and earth "rushes" with "gracious rains." The skies, mirroring God's power in creation, unload an "abundance of blessings" onto earth. This rushing also grammatically links heavens and earth, which seemingly share the singular verb *rauschet*:

Ach, schon rauscht, schon rauscht
Himmel, und Erde vom gnädigen Regen!
Nun ist, wie düstete sie! die Erd' erquickt,
Und der Himmel der Segensfüll' entlastet!⁴⁹

In a sense, then, *Rauschen* unifies and reconciles the actions of God and nature. Certainly, reconciliation is emphasized in the last stanzas, by a "quiet, soft soughing" (stillen, sanften Säuseln) (132) when the storm abates (recalling 1 Kings 19:12), and by the appearance of a rainbow (recalling

47. The speaker asks: "Are you wrathful, Lord, / Because night is your garment?" He immediately answers himself: "This night is the blessing of the earth! / You are not wrathful, Father!" (Zürnest du, Herr, / Weil Nacht dein Gewand ist? / Diese Nacht ist Segen der Erde / Vater, du zürnest nicht!) (*Frühlingsfeier*, 88–91).

48. See Lev. 26:36, 1 Chron. 14:15, Isa. 16:11, and Ezek. 1:24, 3:13, 10:5, 37:7.

49. "Ah, already rushes, already rushes / Heaven, and Earth with gracious rain! / Now it is as if it thirsted! the earth is refreshed, / And the heaven relieved of the abundance of blessings!" (*Frühlingsfeier*, 101–4).

Gen. 6–9). The ode's singer recapitulates the iterative and abundant movements of this typological salvation history in his repetitive exclamations and overflowing enjambments—as in the lines “Ah already rushes, already rushes / Heaven and earth . . . !” He thus might, implicitly, participate in the sublime reconciliation he praises, joining his ode (song, ᾠδή) with the heavenly choirs at the poem's opening.

The workings of *Rauschen* here reflect the broader theological program of the ode. *Frühlingsfeyer* functions as a synoptic progress poem, reaching from the skyscape and its intimations of infinity (a macroscopic, telescopic moment), to the world at its most fragile (a microscopic moment), and at its most violently powerful (the entire landscape set into motion, into narrative). Not only are different, apparently irreconcilable, scales of creation brought into dialogue here, but different kinds of knowledge: reality perceived limitedly but intensely through the senses, and reality perceived limitedly but intensely through biblical narrative and typological allusion. As an emblem of movement and sound found both in sensual experience and scripture, *Rauschen* symbolizes the kind of communication that shuttles epistemologically between belief, speculation and sensation, and soteriologically between judgment and mercy.

Rauschen is sublime in this instance less because it is indeterminate than because it is general, common to God's action and creation's praise, to genesis and destruction. It forms associations between potentially disparate orders in a way that invites comparison with music's creation, within medieval metaphysics, of correspondences between audible sounds, harmony in man, and celestial music—correspondences Klopstock elsewhere evoked very directly.⁵⁰

Klopstock's ode helps to indicate why eighteenth-century language theory cannot be corralled into a Cartesian, rationalist, or semiotic pen, one whose gates were flung open by Romantics, post-Kantians, or postmoderns. For Enlightenment-era thinkers, one view assumes, language meant meaning, and sublimity derailed meaning by interrupting limited, determinate signification. Locke is often taken to exemplify such Enlightenment thinking in arguing that “language being the great Conduit, whereby Men convey their Discoveries, Reasonings, and Knowledge . . . , he that makes an ill use of [language], though he does not corrupt the Fountains of Knowledge, which are in Things themselves, yet he . . . break[s] or stop[s] the Pipes whereby it is distributed.”⁵¹

Bernhard Siegert alluded to this passage in the opening of his provocative media history, *Relays: Literature as an Epoch of the Postal System*. In the

50. See, e.g., *Die Musik* (1796), in Klopstock, *Werke* (HKA), 1.1:527.

51. John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 3.11.5.

beginning, he writes, there was “Noise [*Lärm*] and wrangling [*Zank*] on all channels”: “Language was a pipeline . . . clogged with the ambiguities of rhetoric. Philosophers were its plumbers. Thus began an epoch . . . that equated transmission channels with language, language with communication, communication with understanding, and understanding with the salvation of humanity. . . . From Locke to Wittgenstein I—or from the beginning of British sea power to its zenith—it was their mission to build an empire of semiotic Puritanism.”⁵²

Rauschen, on one reading of this logic, is the noise of meaning-making being interrupted. Theorists like Siegert put such “noise” at the heart of modern literature and even language, staging a revolution against semiotics and semantics, and so following the tenor of work like Barthes’s “Le bruissement de la langue” (1975).⁵³ In this context, pointing to problematic Enlightenment-era predecessors to modern semiotics helps to deconstruct it; the more monolithic the semiotic tradition, the more satisfying its fall.

Certainly, there were strong pushes in our period toward semantics and referential meaning, and these could be accompanied by denigrations of *Rauschen*-like *bruits* and *bruissements*.⁵⁴ In his essay *Sur les opéras* (1677), for instance, Charles de Saint-Évremond (1613–1703) complained to the Duke of Buckingham that, although opera music pleased at first, by its monotony it quickly became “nothing more . . . than a confused noise” (*n’est plus . . . qu’un bruit confus*): representation’s job was to force or impress, and music’s primarily to charm and ornament, as producers of comedies understood; yet in opera, music reigned over representative meanings and sense—achieving a pyrrhic victory, since its harmonies alone lost our attention and became noise.⁵⁵ Similarly focused

52. Siegert, *Relays*, 1; German from Bernhard Siegert, *Relais: Geschichte der Literatur als Epoche der Post, 1751–1913* (Berlin: Brinkmann & Bose, 1993), 5.

53. Roland Barthes’s “Le bruissement de la langue” first appeared as an essay in *Vers une esthétique sans entraves: mélanges offerts à Mikel Dufrenne*, ed. José Augusto França (Paris: UGE, 1975), then later as an essay in Barthes’s identically named larger work *Le bruissement de la langue* [The rustle of language; German: *Das Rauschen der Sprache*] (Paris: Seuil, 1984), 93–96. Compare Siegert, “Geburt der Literatur,” and Michael Franz et al., “Einführung,” in *Electric Laokoon*, xiii, xv–xvi.

54. Note that *bruissement* is not a particularly common eighteenth-century term. It appears only three times in the *Encyclopédie*, twice in explaining that leeks can cure *tintement* (tinnitus or tinkling), and once in an entry on drunkenness. See *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences . . .*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d’Alembert, 17 vols. (Paris, 1751–72), 12:881; 13:129; 17:689. Cited from Robert Morrissey’s online edition, *University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013 Edition)*, <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/>. Although uncommon, the term is evidently already associated, as is increasingly the case for *Rauschen*, with confusion, intoxication, and dissociation from normal perception.

55. Charles de Saint-Évremond, *Oeuvres mêlées de Saint-Évremond*, ed. Charles Giraud, 3 vols. (Paris: Léon Techener Fils, 1866), 2:390–92.

on sound's potential to undermine representation, Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (1717–1783), in the *Discours préliminaire* (1751) to the encyclopedia he edited with Diderot, remarked tersely that “any music that does not portray something is only noise [*bruit*].”⁵⁶ The mark of music's development toward equality with the other arts was that it began to imitate indirectly, not merely reproducing natural *bruits* but working more like a signifying “language.”⁵⁷ D'Alembert's implied opposition between language-music and *bruit* is echoed in Rousseau's and other encyclopedists' sporadic concerns to separate the acoustic properties of *bruits* from a subset of agreeable *sons*.⁵⁸

Yet if Rousseau had some sensitivities about *bruit*, he also connected the development of language and music, in its movement from inarticulate cries into song, with humans' inclination to imitate the “diverse noises” (*bruits divers*) of wind, the agitation of leaves, or murmuring waters.⁵⁹ And imitative and semantic paradigms gave considerable space to noise, rushing, and rustling within music: music most naturally represented not only sounds like voices, but also “all” affecting “noises” “in nature,” and exemplarily the “noise,” “fracas,” and “roaring” of storms;⁶⁰ according to d'Alembert, music would become more language-like by finding equivalents between aural and nonaural experiences, and then signifying the latter—for example, terrifying sights—through the “terrible noise[s]” of the former.⁶¹

More important, eighteenth-century language theory was not monolithic, nor, numerous historians of linguistics argue, primarily Cartesian or purely semiotic.⁶² Even the view of language in Locke's *Essay concerning Human*

56. Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, trans. Richard Schwab with Walter Rex (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 38.

57. *Ibid.*

58. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Bruit,” in *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: Duchesne, 1768), 60–61. See also *Encyclopédie* entries by Rousseau, “Son, Musique,” 15:345; Jean-Joseph Menuret de Chambaud, “Musique, effets de la” (the tone-deaf hear music as *bruit*), 10:908; anon., “Son fondamental,” 7:56. Elsewhere, including in these same entries, *bruit* and *son* are frequently used interchangeably.

59. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Louis de Cahusac, “Chant, Musique,” in *Encyclopédie*, 3:141.

60. Louis chevalier de Jaucourt, “Symphonie,” in *Encyclopédie*, 15:740.

61. D'Alembert, *Preliminary Discourse*, 38–39.

62. According to Hans Aarsleff, “the tenor of eighteenth-century philosophy was anti-Cartesian, and the primary vehicle of this reaction was the philosophy of language” (“Philosophy of Language,” in *Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Knud Haakonssen [Cambridge University Press, 2006], 451). See further Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure* (London: Athlone, 1982); Lia Formigari, *Language and Experience in 17th-Century British Philosophy* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1988). On German eighteenth-century language theory, see Avi Lifschitz, *Language and Enlightenment: The Berlin Debates of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2012). On later eighteenth-century semiotics, see David Wellbery, *Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 228–47. In relation

Understanding (1690) is Janus-faced, looking toward Cartesian theories in its account of signs and thoughts, but anti-Cartesian thought in its account of language as conventional and public.⁶³ More strikingly, Klopstock's *Frühlingsfeyer* implies what we might now call a "pragmatic" more than a semiotic attitude toward language: utterances like odes, and sounds like rushing, primarily do something (transmit praise, announce proximity) rather than signifying separable meanings or "Things."⁶⁴ In particular, the phrase "Zeuge des Nahens" for the roaring of thunder in *Frühlingsfeyer* might remind us of Downing Thomas's description of the relationship between music and language in eighteenth-century France.⁶⁵ While eighteenth-century theorists, in France and elsewhere, doubted music's imitative and referential powers, music nonetheless strongly intersected with language understood as a broader social practice with expressive, affective, phatic, and other dimensions. Music can be cast as discursive, then, not only in the sense that it might operate through language-like systems or grammars but also in the sense that it "leads the listener to a self-consciousness that is defined as the awareness of the presence of another being," a definition of discourse linked to a shift in "the focus of the verbal paradigm . . . from representation as reproduction to representation as a form of communion."⁶⁶

On this model, music can be sublime not when it sloughs off words and aspires to the nonverbal condition of *Rauschen*—in Erlmann's account, breaking through the mediating codes of language and experience toward the unencoded noumenon—but when it joins "rushing" and words to lift the listener out of isolation and skepticism by testifying to "the presence of another."⁶⁷ The sublime has long been connected with avoiding

to music, see Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 3–5, 54–61.

63. Aarsleff, "Philosophy," 453–54; Brigitte Nerlich and David Clarke, *Language, Action, and Context: The Early History of Pragmatics in Europe and America, 1780–1930* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1996), 14–24.

64. For an apposite definition of pragmatics, see Nerlich and Clarke, *Language, Action, and Context*, 3, 9–11. The authors note the strong connection between pragmatics and rhetoric, a subject central to Klopstock's intellectual formation. See Kevin Hilliard, *Philosophy, Letters, and the Fine Arts in Klopstock's Thought* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1987).

65. Downing A. Thomas, *Music and the Origins of Language: Theories from the French Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 142.

66. Ibid. Thomas's formulations resemble particularly the theory of phatic language articulated by Bronislaw Malinowski in "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages," suppl. 1 in C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1923). See Siegert, "Geburt der Literatur," 13–14.

67. On Klopstock's polemic against skepticism, see Kevin Hilliard, *Freethinkers, Libertines and Schwärmer: Heterodoxy in German Literature, 1750–1800* (London: Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, 2011), 63–68.

skepticism and solipsism. Longinus carefully separated the experience of the sublime from intoxicated (*berauscht*) enthusiasm, and maintained its cognitive and reflective dimensions. In the transferal of loftiness from speaker to listener in the sublime—where, “uplifted with a sense of proud exaltation, we are filled with joy and pride, as if we had ourselves produced the very thing we heard”—Longinus’s accent is not on deception, but on what Stephen Halliwell describes as a communion-like “intersubjectivity, a transmission of heightened consciousness between different minds via the penetrating language of a speech or text.”⁶⁸ This sublime requires “more than our own rapture: we need to be receptive to and aware of an act of communication in which one mind’s conception of something great can be felt to ‘echo’ (to adapt one of Longinus’s own most telling tropes), in the minds of others.”⁶⁹

Klopstock’s language use, then, evokes a sublime that is closely connected with the particular qualities, and the very fact of, empirical sensations, and that is supported by a kind of pragmatic attention to discourse as sound (rushing, music, words) that might be termed “protopragmatic.”⁷⁰ It has relatively little in common with Locke’s empirical-semiotic model. On a linguistic level, for strict Lockean empiricists, rushing would be the distracting background noise in “Pipes” carrying signs that encoded messages about “Things”; on a sensory level, rushing would be of little importance: the sound of fluid moving in the ear canal, perhaps, a secondary idea of the sea’s motion, something mechanically generated when air moves over objects. A third kind of sensory and epistemological rushing, developed in explicit opposition to Locke, uses this sound of little importance to undermine the principles of Locke’s *Essay*. In Leibniz’s *Nouveaux essais sur l’entendement humain* (New essays on human understanding) (ca. 1703, published 1765), cognates of *Rauschen* model the progress of perception, and become a heuristic tool that sticks a spanner in Locke’s pipe works.⁷¹

Unlike Locke’s empirical subject, Leibniz’s monadological subject does not register bits of external reality through the senses; rather, it already comprehends or enfolds infinite perceptions, albeit perceptions only partially processed or realized. “There are hundreds of indications,” Leibniz wrote, deploying a rhetoric of multitudes that mirrors his arguments,

68. Longinus, *On the Sublime* 7.2; Stephen Halliwell, *Between Ecstasy and Truth: Interpretations of Greek Poetics from Homer to Longinus* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 333.

69. Halliwell, *Between Ecstasy and Truth*, 333–34.

70. The term is adopted from Nerlich and Clarke, *Language, Action, and Context*, 25–111. Compare Lia Formigari, *A History of Language Philosophies*, trans. Gabriel Poole (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2004), 3, 113–17, on the eighteenth-century “transition from a semantics of ideas to a semantics of usage,” the latter akin to pragmatics.

71. On the following, compare Campe, “*Rauschen* of the Waves,” 23–27.

“leading us to conclude that at every moment there is in us an infinity of perceptions, unaccompanied by awareness or reflection . . . alterations in the soul itself, of which we are unaware because these impressions are either too minute and too numerous, or else too unvarying.”⁷² For Locke, awareness of perception and perception are one. But for Leibniz there are *petites perceptions* lying just under the threshold of conscious awareness and forming the building blocks for fully developed, fully realized, conscious knowledge. We know we possess tiny perceptions because, “when they are combined with others they do nevertheless have their effect and make themselves felt, at least confusedly, within the whole”:

To give a clearer idea of these minute perceptions which we are unable to pick out from the crowd, I like to use the example of the roaring noise [*du mugissement ou du bruit*] of the sea which impresses itself on us when we are standing on the shore. To hear this noise . . . , we must hear the parts which make up this whole, that is the noise of each wave, although each of these little noises makes itself known only when combined confusedly with all the others, and would not be noticed if the wave which made it were by itself. We must be affected slightly by the motion of this wave, and have some perception of each of these noises, however faint they may be; otherwise there would be no perception of a hundred thousand waves, since a hundred thousand nothings cannot make something.⁷³

72. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 53.

73. *Ibid.*, 53–54; Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, ed. Jacques Brunschwig (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966), 38. Leibniz’s aural analogies here and elsewhere recall theories of *harmonia mundi*, the cosmic sounds normally inaudible to humans because—to cite the music theorist and acoustic pioneer Marin Mersenne (1588–1648)—“they are too large, like those of the cataracts of the Nile which deafen the inhabitants of Catadupa, if the ancients do not deceive us [compare Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*, in *Republic* 6.19]; or because the concert of the heavens is so ravishing that it lulls to sleep and charms our ears; or we are accustomed to that music from our mothers’ wombs, and custom is a second nature [compare Cicero, *De finibus* 5.74] that takes away our sensation—just as happens to those who live near coppersmiths, blacksmiths, and armorers, for after some years they almost no longer hear the noise [*bruit*] which at first troubled them” (*Traité de l’harmonie universelle* [Paris: Guillaume Baudry, 1627], 71). For the mark on Mersenne’s musical thought of Augustine, also important to Lutheran-educated writers like Leibniz and Klopstock, see Peter Dear, *Mersenne and the Learning of the Schools* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 80–116. Mersenne’s thought world differs from Leibniz’s, but for both, as for Saint-Évremond, *bruit* is associated with the old or customary, sounds that cannot or can no longer grab our attention. This differs strongly from a self-reflexively “modern” idea of *bruit* as a sign of the new and as-yet unassimilable, as theorized by Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), and discerned in later 1790s music criticism by Michael McClellan, “Battling over the Lyric Muse: Expressions of Revolution and Counterrevolution at the Théâtre Feydeau, 1789–1801” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1994), 204–44.

No *logos*, Serres observed in neo-Leibnizian vein, without noise: no articulate, realized, reasonable sounds without the multiple, confused, nonsignifying blur of each rushing wave. But note that the composite, realized sound in Leibniz's example is another inarticulate noise, "the roaring noise of the sea," and not a *logos*.⁷⁴ To reach divine and rational *logoi*, for Leibniz, we must ascend above brute perceptual data—whether little rustlings or stupendous roars—and attempt to perfect our perceptions through further discernment, separating the individual sounds we already hear, making perceptions increasingly clear, discrete, extensive and complete, and so rising toward godlike comprehension of each part in the whole. Nor are rustlings and roarings illogical for Leibniz in themselves, so to speak, but only insofar as our attention does not grant them articulation.⁷⁵ No *logoi*, we might say, without tiny *logos*-potentializable rustlings.

In sum, if for Locke nonsignifying noise and rhetoric largely obscured and excluded communicative transmissions, then for Leibniz *Rauschen* contained and included everything that could ever be communicated—an infinity not transmitted into the finite subject from outside, but transmitted into consciousness through subjective acts of perception. This contrast does not, however, negate the complexity of Locke's legacy, or the creative uses of rushing, roaring, and rustling by "Lockean" writers in the eighteenth century. One of these writers was Edward Young, a poet who for Klopstock powerfully effected poetry's "final and highest" goal: to energetically "move the whole soul," and thus lead us up "some steps of stronger and the strongest sensations [*Empfindungen*]" into "the theatre of the sublime."⁷⁶ For Klopstock, the virtues of Young's widely read *Night Thoughts* (1742–45) lay in its Christian piety, but not necessarily in its didactic theological content. Klopstock's ode *An Young* (1752) portrays the English poet's "deep song" making his reader "feel" the threat of Judgment Day, "feel what Wisdom desires / When she speaks of the trumpet / The awakener-of-the-dead!"⁷⁷ In this ode, Young teaches his poetic student less to understand doctrine than to experience the call of an irresistible, transformative, yet not-quite or not-merely verbal utterance—a trumpeted

74. Underlining that our attention is at issue, and not the given, material perceptibility of sensations, Leibniz notes that we can become deaf to relatively noisy sounds like "the motion of a mill or a waterfall" (*New Essays on Human Understanding*, 53) if we live beside them and allow them to fall below consciousness, into the blurry unreal world of imperceptible perceptions.

75. *Petites perceptions*, that is, do not exist "in themselves" in Leibniz's monadological schema, where our realization of knowledge genuinely creates objects of knowledge, and tiny perceptions are ontologically less "real" than the fully realized concepts they can become.

76. Klopstock, *Von der heiligen Poesie*, in *Der Messias*, 1, **2r, **2v.

77. "Fühlts, // Dass dein tiefer Gesang . . . / ihm singt! fühlts, was die Weisheit will, / Wenn sie von der Posaune / Spricht, der Todtnerweckerin!" (Klopstock, *Werke* [HKA], 1:126, lines 8–12).

utterance whose effects (to raise up the dead and summon them to judgment) identify it as a performative, that twentieth-century paradigm of pragmatic speech acts.

Night Thoughts elaborated a distinctly Lockean epistemology.⁷⁸ Yet Young's 1728 ode *Ocean* and its dedicatory companion piece, *An Ode to the King*, also celebrated a cognate of Klopstock's sublime *Rauschen*. Oceanic sounds in these odes become an emblem of Britain's expansive mercantile sea power and energy. Such sounds figure the medium of the poet's powerful praise, and his channel into the king's ear to gain royal support. Young's sounds, like Klopstock's, are partly biblical: *Ocean*'s motto is a paraphrase of Psalm 98:8–9, "Let the Sea make a noise, let the Floods clap their hands."⁷⁹ They likewise seem "protopragmatic": the ode performs sublime praise, its singer partly conveying knowledge and judgments about the sea, but primarily undertaking to "divinely rave," to "snatch the lyre, / And plunge into the foaming wave" (*Ocean*, 21, 23–24). His speech-act is also imitative: not unlike Mattheson with his mimetic musical rushing, the poem seems to assume that it can transmit the nature of its subject (the roaring ocean) through the sounds of its verse. And it deploys the logic of the sublime, working to identify the poet with the overwhelming power of the sea and to elevate him along with his song:

The wave resounds!
The rock rebounds!
The *Nereids* to my song reply!
I lead the choir,
And they conspire
With voice and shell, to lift it high.
(25–30)

Connecting songs of praise with semantically obscure rushing sounds was an established classicizing convention, as Young makes clear. Using tropes from Horace's popular ode on Pindar, a Greek poet synonymous with sublimity, Young transforms Rome's "flow[ing]" "*stream*" of poetry, and Greece's thunderous, "rowl[ing]" "*torrent*" of verse, into mere tributaries of Britain's sublimer songs (*King*, 26–27, 29–30).⁸⁰ For only the British lyr-

78. Compare Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, ed. Stephen Cornford (Cambridge University Press, 1989), Night 6, lines 413–61 (hereafter cited in text by section and line number) with Locke, *Essay*, 2.9.15, 2.8.17. The parallel was noted by Peter Stubbs, "Edward Young, and Locke's Theory of Perception," *Notes and Queries* 187 (1944): 14–15.

79. Edward Young, *Ocean*, in *Ocean . . . To which is prefix'd, An Ode to the King . . .* (London: Thomas Worrall, 1728), 31; hereafter cited in the text by short title (*Ocean* and *King*, respectively) and line number.

80. Compare Horace *Carmina* 4.2, lines 1–27. On Pindar's sublimity, see Longinus, *On the Sublime* 33.5. For a related contemporary theorization of sublimely "foaming" and "sounding" poetry, see Aaron Hill, *Gideon; or, The Restoration of Israel* (London: n.p., 1720), 30.

icist dares “To pour the billows”—the whole flood of the ocean—“on his string” (63).

Just as British bards absorb and exceed classical poetry, so too Britain exceeds classical empire builders in sucking up the wealth and produce of other lands through the ocean. The sea is significantly a channel for Britain’s physical and ethical wealth in *Ocean*, which plays repeatedly on the term “main,” a name for the open sea deriving from an Old English word for strength, virtue, power, or an army, and already used in the eighteenth century to describe the main conduit into a building or street.⁸¹

The main! the main!
Is *Britain’s* reign;
Her strength, her glory is her *fleet*;
The main! the main!
Be *Britain’s* strain;
As *Triton’s* strong, as *Syren’s* sweet.
(*Ocean*, 43–48)

The “Main / Sublimes” Young’s poetry (*King*, 49–50), and is reciprocally exalted by the poem as “*Britain’s* reign” and her lofty “strain”—her theme, and the way the theme sounds.

Then something strange happens: the sound is turned off at the mains. Rushing channels become carriers of anxiety and danger, and the positive charge of turbulent sound is reversed. “The World’s the *main*,” the poet laments,

How vext? how vain?
Ambition swells, and Anger foams:
May good men find,
Beneath the wind,
A noiseless shore, unruffled homes!
(*Ocean*, 331–36)

The poem subsequently turns away from imperial expansion and oceanic rushing, and returns to what was, in fact, its opening scene of landed gentlemanly reflection, bucolic virtues, and quiet. The rural idyll at the beginning of the poem contained a “rill” to animate the “still[ness]” of the scene, but this stream made no more noise than the poet’s thoughts (4–5). There was perhaps implicit sound in the landscape, just as sound is implicit in written words (and in the embodied process of writing them); but no sound was consciously apprehended. Nature here “list’n[s]” to the poet rather than making noise for, with, or against him (6).⁸² From his vantage

81. *OED*, s.v. “main, n. 1,” def. 8.

82. There is a play here on “list” as “nod[ding]” (swaying) and listening.

of Lucretian “careless ease” in the pastoral scene, even the “boundless *tyde*” seemed muted and docile:

Waves cease to foam, and winds to roar;
Without a breeze,
The curling Seas
Dance on, in *measure*, to the shore.
(3, 8–12)

The quiet of the countryside and noise of war and city (here symbolized by the ocean) form an established contrast in the georgic mode Young appropriates.⁸³ But what prompts his speaker to leave the silent rill in the first place or return there again? One answer is purely generic: in a brief, much-imitated passage in Virgil’s second *Georgic*, secluded nature is the place where the speaker implores the Muses to “ravis[h]” him away from earth altogether and give him knowledge of the universe, “the Ways of wandring Stars,” the meanings of earthquakes and eclipses, “Why flowing Tides prevail upon the Main, / And in what dark Recess they shrink again.”⁸⁴ After this plea, the speaker returns to earth and hopes for a quiet, inglorious life much like that extolled at the close of *Ocean*. Young’s extensive journey through the roaring ocean and its turbulent passions and worldly enterprises, then, can be read as an amplification of the speculative journey of Virgil’s recluse.

Unlike Young’s oceanic knowledge, however, the knowledge hoped for by Virgil’s speaker seems as quiet as the countryside: its model is Lucretius’s mental journey through the bright but silent sky in *De rerum natura*, exhilarating without being agitating, coordinated with the Epicurean ethical and affective ideal of nonmoving pleasure or tranquility (*voluptas*). Interestingly, Klopstock’s *Frühlingsfeyer* as well as Young’s *Ocean* can be read as exploiting and disrupting this model. Styled, on its first publication, “an ode about the serious contentments [or, we might say, *voluptates*] of country life” (Eine Ode über die ernsthaften Vergnügungen des Landlebens), Klopstock’s poem opens by explicitly rejecting a desire for speculative flight through the whole cosmos. Where Lucretius’s speaker found a cosmos untouched by the gods, Klopstock finds God everywhere in his more modest survey. And *Frühlingsfeyer* refuses Virgil’s sep-

83. Compare Virgil, *Georgics* 2.459–82.

84. John Dryden, trans., *The Works of Virgil* (London: Tonson, 1697), 91. Another probable intertext is Dryden’s translation of Horace’s Epicurean *Ode* 3.29; see *Sylvae* (London: Tonson, 1685), 127–34. Here the “nauseous pleasures” of retirement are given piquancy by the “tempestuous” “tide of bus’ness,” which, “like the running stream,” sometimes deceptively runs “with a noiseless gentle course” before “bear[ing] down all before it, with impetuous force” (lines 14, 52–59).

aration of noisy town from quiet country and quiet knowledge: in Klopstock's countryside, life and knowledge, like creation itself, are resonant.

Similar to Klopstock's poem in this respect, Young's speculative journey means loudly praising noisy exertions, passions, and active freedoms that jar with the quiet life. Suvir Kaul's deft account of this dissonance casts it as a sign of Young's "dual desire," shared by many eighteenth-century writers on nation, to respond to "the excitement of empire" and "whiggish" expansion from within "settled ('Tory') countryside moorings."⁸⁵ To restrain the new empire's ruinous excesses, new sources of wealth, power, and culture are tethered to old. For, Kaul suggests, Young's celebration of empire is unsettled by "the specter of unbridled desire and its fatal consequences that haunted the antimercantilist moralists of the age."⁸⁶

Where this interpretation suggests a poem pulled between irresolvable ideologies, a slight interpretive shift to sound and the senses emphasizes the poem's coherencies. This is not to say that ideological conflicts are not in play, but rather that *Ocean* attempts to present a positive program (however imperfect or unsavory) for reconciling these conflicts. On this reading, the ocean's imperial mercantilism is tacitly absorbed by the pacific landscape and soundscape it apparently threatens, giving rise to a more extensive and integrated empire. Oceanic noises become something like *petites perceptions* or white noise, the constant background rush of *negotium*. Against this rush it becomes possible to hear the pleasures and philosophical-poetic traction of soft *otium*; against this always potentially disruptive roar, pleas for (royal) protection of *otium* and of the "music" of poetry become urgent and plangent (*King*, 91).

At least four domains are connected with this incorporation of noisiness into softness: moral economy, empiricism, the sublime, and poetics. The poem's progress clearly mimics the mercantile economy of setting forth from home and returning again with raw goods. But this economy also suggests the way a proper British morality can contain the energies of (potentially rapacious) expansion within the bounds of rural satiety: land/home is the destination of imperial wealth, but also its implicit true origin—in the wealth of "daring," "honest[y]," self-critical wisdom, and benevolence that motivate and govern virtuous expansion (*Ocean*, 105, 108).

Just as complete Britishness meets and enriches the wealth of maritime endeavor through solid, settled reflections and virtues formed at home, so too in completed empirical experience, the subject enriches the rush-

85. Suvir Kaul, *Poems of Nation, Anthems of Empire: English Verse in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 199.

86. *Ibid.*, 194.

ing ideas of sensation first encountered on the shore of the senses, that liminal zone between interior and exterior. The raw materials of primary and secondary ideas are then incorporated by internal/landed understanding and processed as ideas of reflection. The early appearance of a rill running between shore and sea becomes significant here, suggesting a readiness for interaction between the nation/subject and the external world, through inbound trade and the senses—senses that Young, following Locke, elsewhere calls “small inlet[s]” that “Take-in, at once, the landscape of the world,” “And half-create the wondrous world they see” (*Night Thoughts*, 6.425–27).⁸⁷

The shore is also a locus classicus for an “enlightened” sublime, marked less by agitated terror than by danger and exertion contained by reflective distance: danger seen from afar and experienced vicariously. Lucretius gave the eighteenth century a commonplace of this kind of sublime in his description of the sweetness of watching from the safety of the shore a mariner struggling in a storm, an analogy for the way the miseries of human labor and strife add piquancy to the serene pleasures of philosophy.⁸⁸ *Ocean*’s speaker is similarly astonished and yet reassured by the prospect of endangered boats and the “rush[ings]” and “roarings” of storms (55–108).

Finally, Young hints that the methods of the expansive, exploratory poet—whose “fingers fly, / Now pause,” “Now dance, now creep,” “Now dive, now sweep, / And fetch the sound from every string”—mean incorporating and tempering the “Blast” that “rushes forth” and “thunders in [his] lay” into the more modulated music of patriotic praise (*King*, 74–78, 83–84). Soft “sighs” as well as rushing blasts are “file[d],” “turn[ed],” and struck “On anvils” by “Graces” whose “every stroke the work refines!” (80, 85–90). The repeated blows, like the closely repeated rhymes of Young’s tail-rhyme stanzas, will form patterns and “*measure*” that, like the repeated, apparently noiseless, waves cited at the beginning of *Ocean*, transform disorderly energy into purposively energetic and resounding verse (*Ocean*, 12). This is what joins moral economy to poetics, making someone who plays with verbal noises another counselor or philosopher-statesman. Poetry not only immortalizes moral truths and historical virtues (as explained in stanzas 17–21 of *An Ode to the King*); its patternings of sound, following classical modal theory, also modulate and temper national character:

How musick charms?
How metre warms?

87. Compare Locke, *Essay*, 2.9.15.

88. Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 2.1–17.

Parent of actions good, and brave!
 How vice it tames?
 And worth inflames?
 And holds proud empire o'er the grave?
 (King, 91–96)

Oceanic blasts, rustles, rushings and roarings are the indispensable energy this expansionist-mercantile music; rushing continues in the background as the unapprehended sound of the furnace.

* * *

Siegert aligned the era of “British sea power” with an exclusion of *Rauschen*-like noises from an enlightening “empire of semiotic Puritanism.” By contrast, Young closely indexes imperial expansion to sublime, semiotically underdetermined, rushing noises. In linking such sounds to both language and trade, Young even intersects with a “post-enlightened” theorist like Barthes, who paired the pleasures of rustling counters or exchanges of capital on one hand, and of words swishing past our ears on the other.⁸⁹ The rustle of language, for Barthes, was the sound of the new nature that modern critics had to gloss, just as the ancients “interrogated” the secrets of their nature in rustling leaves.⁹⁰ For Klopstock, too, listening to energetic *Rauschen* was the job of the true critic. His epigram “Das feine Ohr” (The fine ear) (1774) mocked pedantic, academic attention to sound:

Gleich dem thatenlosen Schüler der Ethik,
 Hörst du in der Poetik
 Gras wachsen; aber hörst nie
 Den Lorber rauschen in dem Hain der Poesie.⁹¹

The most finely discriminating parser of verse can miss something constantly running through the landscape, the breath that stirs the leaves and animates the poet’s crown. Although Klopstock’s and Barthes’s writings testify differently to the extent to which humans live in language rather than nature, this epigram shows no facile nature enthusiasm. Leaves of poetry do not straightforwardly transcribe leaves of laurel; there is a nature inside language with its own wind and soil. As this conceit hints, and as we saw in German music writings, rustling is connected with pas-

89. Barthes, *Le bruissement de la langue*, 93–96.

90. Ibid., 96.

91. “Like the inactive student of ethics, / You hear in poetics / Grass growing; but you’re never free / For the laurel rustling in the grove of poetry” (Klopstock, *Epigramme*, in *Werke* [HKA], 2:35).

sages between first and second natures across the eighteenth century. This is the case in Klopstock's religious sublime, which moves between natural phenomena and the new heaven and new earth formed by typological interpretation and poetic recapitulation. It is also the case in Young's poetics, with their implicit movements between raw ideas of sensation and ideas of reflection. Indeed, the empirical and imperial subject's creation of a second nature, adumbrated in *Ocean*, becomes explicit in *Night Thoughts*. Here "*Intellect*" "Interrogates" the findings of "Sense and Fancy,"

And from the mass those underlings import
From their materials sifted, and refined,
.....
Forms art and science, government and law.
(6.449–55)

This human world of "civil life" improves fallen nature and "Strikes out, with master-hand, a copy fair" of God's original "idea" of "human bliss" (6.457, 459–61). Again, rushing is not far away. Within this "changed Creation," the "naval thunders" of "Britannia's voice" "rise" to "aw[e] the world to peace!" like a sea wall amid "furious waves":

Their roar amidst,
Out-speaks the Deity, and says, "O main!
Thus far, nor farther! new restraints obey."
(6.788–96)

Thunder against roar, awful conflict against sublimely awful peace, noise against noise, create the second nature of reformed human society. *Rauschen*, as Rüdiger Campe observed, is "a matter of ordering," and so "a matter of limit," but simultaneously "a matter of the medium," of "transmission within one medium and the transposition from one medium [or one nature] into another."⁹²

The meager role of "enlightened" *Rauschen* in recent scholarship stems, I have suggested, from the eagerness of some critics to exhume and behead structuralist linguistics and semiotics, and so to focus on strands of cultural history where semiotic language theories seemed to have reigned, and where *Rauschen* had become problematic (as for Locke) or alluring (as for countercultural Romantics). Yet *Rauschen* was not a sensation or a model of sensation waiting to be rediscovered after the Enlightenment. Nor were *Rauschen*'s connections with the sublime, song, and language forged around 1800. For Young as for Klopstock, "rushing" sounds facilitate and even emblemize linguistic and perceptual transmission. Rushing

92. Campe, "*Rauschen* of the Waves," 21.

sounds were also material for their sublimes. The centrality of energetic transmission, or “transport,” to the sublime persists through classical, Enlightenment, and post-Kantian varieties of sublimity. This means that a phenomenon like energetic *Rauschen* can illuminate the long history of this extremely variable aesthetic category, so closely concerned with sensory excesses, sensory privations, and sensory processing. But the continuity of transmission and transport should not obscure important differences between varying models of sublimity and of *Rauschen*. Sounds in the orbit of *Rauschen* formed a test case for different strands of Enlightenment-era thinking, not only about hearing but about processing sensation more broadly: *Rauschen* could be the essence of a pragmatic transmission connecting self and other (be that other nature, God, capital, or the king); an obstruction to “proper” empirical transmissions of signs; or a rationalist’s blurry perception of the infinite, a repertoire for endless, endlessly improvable, transmissions.